

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for bending glass panels, said apparatus comprising:
  - an upper mould carriage track [[(1)]] with successive mould carriages [[(9)]] whose front or rear wall [[(11)]] separates successive heating compartments {2, 3} and several successive bending compartments {4a, 4b} from each other, the mould carriages [[(9)]] being adapted for an intermittent conveyance towards a press-bending compartment [[(4b)]] having its ceiling provided with a descendable and ascendable male mould [[(22)]];
    - a lower mould carriage track [[(21)]] with successive mould carriages [[(9)]] whose rear or front wall [[(11)]] separates successive cooling compartments {5, 6, 7} from each other, the mould carriages being adapted for an intermittent conveyance in a direction opposite to the conveying direction of the mould carriages present on the upper mould carriage track ;
      - a number of bending moulds [[(12)]] supported by the mould carriages [[(9)]];
        - preheating compartments [[(2)]] present in the upstream end of the upper mould carriage track [[(1)]], in which the heating of glass panels is effected by means of forced convection for which thermal energy has been obtained from glass

panels presently annealing in downstream end compartments [[(7)]] of the lower mould carriage track;

- radiation heating means [[(13)]] on the ceiling of preheating compartments [[(3)]] at least in some of the preheating compartments;
- radiation heating means [[(14)]] on the ceiling of gravitationally working bending compartments [[(4a)]];
  - an intermediate floor (15a, 15) which separates the bending compartments [[(4a)]] and preheating compartments (3, 3a) from compartments (5, 6) therebelow ;
    - a lift mechanism [[(20)]] for lowering the mould carriages [[(9)]] from the upper track [[(1)]] onto the lower track [[(21)]] together with bent glass panels;

wherein the mould carriages (9) ~~being~~ are provided with an open-structured or otherwise highly heat transmissive bottom [[(10)]], the mould supporting carriage [[(9)]] having its bottom fitted with bearer elements [[(26)]] and the press-bending compartment [[(4b)]] has its lower section fitted with brace elements [[(27)]] for the mould carriage [[(9)]], which provide bracing for the bearer elements [[(26)]] during a press-bending operation performed by means of the male mould [[(22)]], and

wherein ~~that in connection with~~ the brace elements [[(27)]] are provided with lifting and lowering mechanisms ~~for the brace elements, and (27), characterized in~~ that the brace elements [[(27)]] comprise:

- a frame (28, 29, 30, 31), which has the brace elements [[(27)]] arranged in connection therewith and which extends partly beyond the press-bending compartment's [[(4b)]] walls ;

- power units [[(32)]], which are arranged in connection with a frame portion [[(31)]] remaining outside the press-bending compartment's [[(4b)]] wall and by which the frame ~~(28, 29, 30, 31)~~ is ascendable and descendable.

2. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as set forth in claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the lifting and lowering mechanism for the brace elements [[(27)]] comprises pneumatic or hydraulic cylinders [[(32)]].

3. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as set forth in claim 1 [[or 2]], ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the mould bearer elements [[(26)]] comprise flat bars, rods, tubes or other such beam-like elements fitted to the front and rear edges of the mould carriage's [[(9)]] open-structured bottom.

4. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as set forth in ~~any of the preceding~~ claims 1-3, ~~characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the frame ~~(28, 29, 30, 31)~~ comprises:

- two elongated girders [[(28)]], which are disposed at a distance from each other underneath the bearer elements [[(26)]] and whose ends are formed with flanges [[(29)]] extending beyond side walls [[(4c)]] of the press-bending compartment [[(4b)]] ; and

- longitudinal beams [[(31)]], each of which is fitted rigidly in a lengthwise direction of the furnace between two successive flanges [[(29)]].

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as set forth in ~~any of the preceding claims 1-4, characterized in that claim 1, further comprising~~, in connection with the frame ~~{28, 29, 30, 31}~~ are provided positioning elements ~~(34, 35, 37, 38)~~ for the mould carriage ~~[(9)]~~.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus as set forth in ~~any of claims 1-5, characterized in that claim 1, wherein~~ the press-bending operation is adapted to be at least partially performed by lifting the frame ~~{28, 29, 30, 31}~~.